

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

June 1998

Career spans 42 years of public service

He was baptized in the floods — the Floods of 1985, to be precise. Since his initiation, he's lived through just about every kind of natural or manmade disaster that can be imagined in Virginia. Most importantly, this man has calmly guided Virginia's emergency services away from the dark remnants of the Cold War mentality to the edge of the new century.

After 42 years of public service, 24 in emergency services, VDES State Coordinator Addison Slayton retired on June 1. As agency head, Slayton worked with five governors and earned the respect of people across federal, state and local government.

"During Addison's tenure, the past decade has been one of tremendous change in the emergency management field," said Wanda Reed, Roanoke's emergency services coordinator. "Through his calm and solid leadership, partnerships have been developed which have facilitated the highest level of response and recovery during disasters. He's listened to needs at the local level and has implemented programs to address our concerns. His ability to work well with others and to effectively bring about consensus has made Virginia a leader in emergency management."

Slayton, a Richmond native, graduated in 1955 from what is now Virginia Commonwealth University. While working first for the Department of Corrections and then VDES, he served 26 years in the Army Reserves where he earned the nickname, "Stick," as a military police officer.

Like most Virginians who have been around long enough to remember, Slayton is quick to identify wrathful Camille as the impetus for change in Virginia's emergency management. In fact, Slayton felt the deadly hurricane influenced events

beyond the borders of the state.

"The largest single change I've seen has to do with the nationwide emphasis on emergency management," he commented. "That did not exist anywhere near the current degree when I came to this agency in 1974. We were still civil defense and



Addison Slayton in a portrait taken shortly after his appointment as state coordinator.

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our sister federal organization was the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency. Any disaster preparedness we did was 'on the sly' with state money. Camille and Agnes brought to everyone's attention that we needed a federal agency to deal with natural and manmade disasters. As a result, a lot more attention was paid to natural disasters."

The people who worked with Slayton through large and small-scale events have strong memories of the man who's managed more disasters in 13 years than any of his predecessors. His first boss was retired VDES State Coordinator and fellow Army Reservist, Kim Anderson,

who originally brought Slayton on board.

"Anyone can be a 'yes-man,'" said Anderson. "Stick was willing to do the work and take the responsibility. He shared his feelings and was a very loyal worker. Everyone has their own styles of management that represent their personalities in most cases. One of the reasons why I hired him is that our styles were complementary."

As State Coordinator, Slayton has been active and influential at the federal level. He helped form the National Emergency Management Association and, with his guidance, Virginia initiated the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. Keith Keister, retired deputy coordinator who worked under Slayton in the early 1990s, commented, "It was both his personality and his management style that made him able to withstand the changes. He had the ability to work within the confines of the federal programs. He had an outstanding rapport with FEMA and was well-liked."

The agency has developed some of the strongest emergency management programs in the country under Slayton's watch, most notably the state's precedent-setting hazardous materials program. "There was a need — you could see it building. There were a lot more petroleum trucks on the road, a lot more chemical
(continued on p. 2)

Inside

- ☐ Unified ICS recommended by SIM committee - p. 3
- ☐ VDES updates brochure - p. 3
- ☐ FEMA looking for FCOs interested in travel - p. 4

Public Service

(continued from p. 1)

companies — this hadn't been the case before," said Slayton. "The whole arena of hazmat, from the standpoint of integrated, coordinated response, simply didn't exist in the '60s and '70s. The intent of the program was to provide a statewide hazmat training and emergency response program. That was a major challenge— hiring the people, training the people and getting the teams in place."

Delegate Vivian Watts, public safety secretary under former Governor Gerald Baliles, pointed out that "selling" the hazmat program to a diverse and sometimes resistant audience was a major accomplishment. She felt Slayton's supreme "people skills" helped push the program through.

"Addison's calm demeanor and respect — conveyed along with his very positive approach — that made all the difference," she said. "He drew from people and listened to their concerns. Very important to me — with 14 other agencies I was responsible for — was the fact that I could trust him. 'Trust' is whether or not you're going to remain focused during a crisis. My secretariat was one in which I had to respond to a lot of crises. I could trust Addison's judgment and not worry that he had other agendas going. The crux is whether or not this was effective for emergency services and it most assuredly was."

"He's the quintessential Virginia gentleman who can adapt to people and situations," said Assistant State Coordinator, George Foresman. "He has the ability to listen to all sides of an issue and, most importantly, to

honestly entertain a recommendation or position. He is one of those rare breed of managers who encourages diversity of thinking among his

tribute to Slayton's career. "Addison has done an outstanding job of guiding not only the Virginia Department of Emergency Services, but the



Governor Jim Gilmore with Slayton at this year's National Hurricane Conference held in Norfolk.

staff." Foresman noted this open-minded flexibility was perhaps one of the most valuable lessons he learned from Slayton through the years of working with him.

Deputy State Coordinator Michael Cline described some of the qualities that enabled Slayton to effectively steer the agency into the information age. "He had vision and was able to see the needs for a broad-based approach. He was a great facilitator — able to get people to sit down and work through the issues. Stick got people to understand what the needs were and how they fit into the picture without threatening their authority or programs. Local government respected and trusted him. The things Stick said he would do — he did his best to follow through. It's very obvious he left a legacy we will need to follow — to continue to develop the overall capacity of emergency management in Virginia."

Current Public Safety secretary, Gary Aronhalt, paid

and winning state, national and international acclaim."

Slayton has made no firm plans regarding his continuing involvement in emergency services, but will see what opportunities arise. Right now, travel with his wife, catching up on long-delayed household chores and a bit of relaxation is in the immediate retirement picture.

What lays ahead for Virginia's emergency management? No one can predict the future, but Slayton did offer an observation. "I think one of the major points anyone who sits in this chair needs to understand is disasters are primarily local events and preparedness needs to start at the local level," he said. "The role of state government is to assist and support local government. It's a 'bottom-up' instead of a 'top-down' role. You can have great state programs but nothing at the local level and you're going to have problems. The best programs are built from the local level."

Commonwealth's entire emergency management community through a period of unprecedented change. He has done so with style, substance and grace; achieving the highest levels of preparedness

Sites of interest

For a dose of scholarly information on the sociological and economic impacts of disasters, visit the "Societal Aspects of Weather" Web site at <http://www.dir.ucar.edu/esig/socasp/>

Some of the topics include "Economic and Casualty Data" and "Community and Research Tools." The first contains links to sources for scientific data on the societal impacts of weather. The second offers information on the social and behavioral aspects of disasters.

Visit the "virtual library" at the Natural Hazards Center Internet site. Called "Netsources," it lists and describes numerous Internet resources — from Web sites to gophers — that cover a vast array of topics. Click on the link that intrigues you to go straight to the site. You'll want to bookmark this at <http://www.colorado.EDU/hazards/netsources.html>

Download a copy of the American Red Cross publication, *Disaster Preparedness for People With Disabilities*, at <http://www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/disability.html>

The brochure offers practical information for disabled people such as how to create a personal support network, complete a personal assessment, prepare a disaster supplies kit and other actions to help foster self reliance.

HAZ MAT

Highway safety targeted by General Assembly

Joint Resolution proposes study for statewide highway incident management system

In a typical highway incident, a blocked lane of traffic that may take 20 minutes to clear can cause a two-mile-long backup of cars loaded with irate citizens. When hazardous materials are involved, the risk factors are higher and the cleanup is slower. That 20-minute delay can stretch into hours of clogged roadways.

Citizens and businesses within a community may not care about the complexities of a multi-agency response; they may simply perceive that cleaning up the mess takes too long and causes them personal and economic hardships. To spur the development of a speedier system of response, last year the General Assembly passed Senate Joint Resolution 233.



"The intent of the legislation was to make sure we established a statewide system that would be followed by all the involved groups," said VDES Tech Haz Division Director Ralph Jones. "The resolution requires that a highway incident management system be put into place to manage road accidents, whether or not they involve hazardous materials."

VDOT's Statewide Incident Management Committee (SIM) has been tasked by the Senate to develop such a system. The committee has recommended that the Incident Command System as taught by the National Fire Academy, specifically the Unified Command component, be adopted as the statewide system. The SIM committee members responsible for implementation include representatives from VDOT, the State Police, VDES, Fire Services and EMS and law enforcement associations.

Under the recommended system, clear lines of authority are established within the responding agencies; everyone answers to one central Incident Commander; all of the critical players are involved in the decision making; and the ICS risk assessment process ensures that the subsequent strategies developed are based on jointly-defined objectives and priorities.

"There's a need for it," said Jones. "The impact of a highway incident, particularly one involving hazardous materials, can transcend the boundaries of the state. Because of this, states across the country are moving toward adopting some form of a highway incident command system."

Software for pilots has SAR capabilities

by Capt. Debbie Magaldi
Virginia Air National Guard

An award-winning software program — originally developed for the Air Force by a Virginia Air National Guard soldier — can prove useful to Virginia's emergency services community. Fighter pilot Maj. Bobby Sanford and a handful of his computer buddies wrote a program titled *FalconView* that provides aeronautical maps and geographical data. Pilots, navigators and flight engineers can use this data for mission planning and to gather other information while in flight.

Not only aircrews but other groups can use this software which taps into satellite technology to retrieve nearly instantaneous, digital satellite data. It provides pilots and other users with current information on a country's geographical or political borders, access to maps, elevation information, naviga-

tional aids and coordinates, satellite imagery and information on manmade and natural hazards. When teamed with Global Positioning Satellite data, *FalconView* permits real-time, precise-locating abilities during ground-based search and rescue missions and in military humanitarian efforts.

The program can be used by police departments, forestry and park departments, and search and rescue organizations. According to Sanford, about 13,000 Air Force and Navy people and the Atlanta, Georgia, Police Department are current users of the software.

This Windows-based application runs on any 486 PC with eight megabytes of RAM.

The *FalconView* software is available at no charge to government entities. For more information, call Bobby Sanford at 804/236-6406, e-mail: bobbyf16@aol.com.

Updated brochure storms public

It's sizzling, it's action-packed and it tells all. The VDES brochure, *What to do in an Emergency*, has been recently redesigned and updated to reflect new information in the public education arena and to better guide citizens in your community through the disaster preparedness process.

The booklet contains preparedness tips for floods, hurricanes, thunderstorms, tornadoes and other natural disasters, an expanded portion for special-needs people, an updated first aid chapter and newly added sections on pet preparedness, household chemicals and missing persons.

The bright, eye-catching colors and easy-to-read text will aid you in your public education efforts. To order your copies, call Bertha Jackson at 804/897-6510.

Training Calendar

Operations Division

Coordinators' Briefing

June 10-11
Chesapeake

Introduction to Emergency Management

June 17-19
Harrisonburg

Reservist Training: Disaster Field Office Orientation and Federal Response Plan Overview

June 23
Roanoke

Reservist Tabletop Exercise

July 8
Richmond

Exercise Design

July 8-9
Leesburg

EOC Management and Operations

July 14-16
Rockingham County

Status Assessment Facilitator's Workshop

July 27-28
Danville
For information, call the VDES Training Office at 804/897-6559

Technological Hazards Division

Cameo Workshop

June 13-14
Patrick County
For information, call George Roarty at 804/897-6574

Hazardous Materials Incident Management

September 21-23
Virginia Beach
For information, call Ron Hargrave at 804/897-6573

Other Training

Mantrailing Bloodhound Training Seminar

July 6-10
Loudoun County
For information, call Terry Davis at 703/777-0408

Underground Storage Tanks

September 3
Richmond
For information, call Christine Coggins at 804/828-4548

Conferences

Public Safety Educators' Conference

August 7-9
Richmond
For information, call Carolyn Sanford at 804/861-0263

FEMA looks for FCO

If you have the upper management skills to be an effective Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) for FEMA, then FEMA is looking for you. Because of the large number of disasters that have been declared over the past several years — for example, 25 disasters were declared between January and April of this year alone — Congress has approved 25 new positions and funding for a full-time Federal Coordinating Officer Professional Cadre within FEMA.

The FCO is the lead federal official who is responsible for coordinating federal response efforts in states affected by disasters. This full-time assignment requires travel to disaster operation sites; responsibility for all programs and systems established under a presidential disaster declaration; coordination of resources from federal, state and local government as well as voluntary agencies; and other skills.

For a vacancy announcement, call 800/879-6076 and request a copy of announcement #MW-98-RR-107-SSM or access FEMA's Web site at <http://www.fema.gov>

Insurance organization changes name to better reflect mission

The Insurance Institute for Property Loss Reduction, an initiative of the insurance industry, has changed its name to the Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS). The new name better reflects the organization's mission of reducing deaths, injuries, property damage, economic losses and human suffering caused by natural disasters. Some of its nonprofit and government partners include FEMA, the National American Red Cross and the National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters.

From October 22-23, the IBHS is holding its annual 1998 Congress in Orlando, Florida. For more information, contact Karen Gahagan at 617/722-0200, ext. 224, email: info@ibhs.org or visit the organization's Web site at <http://www.ibhs.org>



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